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ABSTRACT

Intended for those who manage, organize, and oversee the information desk of the State University of New York at Stony Brook Library, this guide contains practical information about staffing, acquiring materials, and operating procedures. The guide opens with a list of suggestions for recruiting and scheduling volunteers for the information desk. Guidelines for orienting volunteers are then presented: (1) reserve a conference room for orientation sessions several days before the desk goes into operation; (2) prepare a three-page handout about publications available at the information desk, departments located within the library and their telephone numbers, and a list of most frequently asked questions; (3) send a work schedule to the volunteers with their hours circled in red; and (4) review the handouts thoroughly at orientation and circulate handouts to volunteers who do not attend one of the orientation sessions. Core materials kept at the information desk are listed, the procedures for requesting them from different offices on campus are outlined, and daily operating procedures are detailed. Appendixes include a memorandum for university department heads about recruiting volunteers, a blank desk schedule, lists of library information desk sources of information and university offices located in the main library, a list of questions frequently asked at the information desk, a memo to volunteers, a completed desk schedule, and a thank you note to volunteers. (SD)

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LIBRARY INFORMATION DESK

An Organizational and Operating Guide

By Mary Beth Souza

For Library Services Committee

Main Library
University At Stony Brook, SUNY
Stony Brook, NY

1989

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STAFFING

Scheduling Volunteers

1. Set the dates and hours during which the desk will be staffed. Usually, this is the first three days of the fall semester from 9:00 am through 3:00 pm. (It's worth while to staff the desk until 5:00 if volunteers are available).

2. Send out a letter and blank schedule to department heads requesting volunteers from their departments. They should authorize their staff members' participation by writing the names of volunteer in the appropriate time slots on the blank schedule. Each time slot should have space for two volunteers' names. (See sample letter and schedule in Appendix A).

3. It is best to circulate this request among departments heads at least one month before the beginning of the semester. If time is short you may prefer to send department heads individual letters simultaneously. While this may result in two staffers from different departments signing up for the same hours, it is much quicker.

4. Keep one blank master schedule for yourself and fill-in names of staffers from all departments as you receive them. Once you have heard from every department, work out any problems in the schedule.

   a.) If you have too many people for one time slot ask some of them to move to other understaffed slots. Remind them to clear the new hours with their department head.

   b.) If there are empty slots in the schedule ask member of the Committee to fill in. Also ask Committee members to be prepared to be back-ups in case any scheduled staffer cannot make their time slot due to illness, etc.

Orienting Volunteers

1. Reserve the Administration or 2nd Floor Conference Room for several hours on the day before the desk is to go into operation. You might want to schedule two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, to make attendance more convenient for volunteers.

2. Prepare a three page handout including the following:

   a.) Library Information Desk - Source of Information
   The purpose of this handout is to outline types of publications to be available at the desk. More important publications should be listed by name (i.e. class schedules and bulletins). This listing will guide staffers in locating answers at the desk.

   b.) University Offices Located in the Main Library
   This ready reference list with room and phone numbers provides quick answers to the most often asked directional questions.

   c.) Frequently Asked Questions
   This list gives answers to some of the most often asked questions.

   These handouts should be updated annually as locations, phone numbers and policies are constantly changing.
   (See sample handouts in Appendix B).

3. Once the schedule has been completed, (about two weeks prior to beginning of semester) send a memo to each volunteer reminding them of the hours they are to staff the desk. Attach a copy of the completed schedule with their hours circled in red. Also include information about orientation sessions to be held a few days prior to the desk's operation. (See sample memo and completed schedule in Appendix C). If you decide not to have orientation sessions send copies of the three page handout with the memo.

4. At orientation sessions be sure to go over the handouts. Point out any changes which have occurred since last year. (For example, the reserve room is moving up to the stacks; the book store can now be reached by taking the elevator near reference to the basement, etc.). Remind volunteers to bring this handout with them when they come to staff the desk.

5. Make available copies of each publication and invite the volunteers to look them over.

6. Inform volunteers of procedure to be followed in the event they cannot make their scheduled hours. Also, ask them to please stay at desk until their replacement comes; give directions on what to do if replacement does not show up.

7. Go over operating procedures reminding staffers about keeping "desk copies", sending people who have questions they can't answer to the reference desk, notifying you of any frequently asked question to which we don't have an answer (you can find out and leave info at desk for other staffers), etc.

8. Circulate handouts to volunteers who are unable to come to one of the orientation sessions.

ACQUIRING MATERIALS

Telephone Arrangements

1. In making telephone requests from different offices on campus for materials for the information desk you should:

   a.) Be sure to identify yourself as a member of the Committee and state that you are requesting materials for the Library Information Desk operated annually by the Committee.

   b.) Get the name of the person you are speaking to so that you can develop a contact in each office. This is especially helpful when publications you need have not yet been printed and you need to call back at a later date.

   c.) Make specific arrangements for pick-up or delivery of materials. Keep in mind that it sometimes takes quite a while for things to arrive by campus mail so you may want to send a student assistant to pick up some materials.

   d.) Try to arrange for all publications to arrive at least one week prior to the orientation sessions so you can have time to update the handout entitled "Library Information Desk - Sources of Information."

Core Materials

2. The following is a "core" list of the most used and requested items with notes on how to acquire them. Be sure to find out when the campus publications are coming out and to reserve copies for our information desk early as Campus Administration may run out of these quite quickly.

   a.) Campus Maps - reference has some but it may be best to order a supply through Audrey Koppos in the Director's Office.

   b.) Final Class Schedules (Undergraduate and Graduate) should be requested early from Betty Becktel in the Registrar's Office (632-6885). Try to get two cartons of undergraduate schedules and one of graduate schedules. These go very fast.

   c.) Undergraduate Bulletins are available from the Undergraduate Admissions Office (632-6868). Try to get two cartons.

   d.) Graduate Bulletin is available from the Graduate School (632-7040) located in 201 Lab Office Building. Try to get one carton.

   e.) Bus Schedules, especially those for the campus bus and the S-60, are high in demand. The S-60 is run by the Coram Bus Service (732-5518). You can also try to get schedules from New Student Programs (632-6710) and the Student Activities Office (632-6828).

f.) Long Island Rail Road Train schedules are available from the Stony Brook train station. For brochures on reduced fare trains from Stony Brook to New York City contact Nancy Walker of Three Village Travel (751-7066).

g.) Campus Directories are available from the Campus Mail Room in the Commissary Building (632-6231). Try to get at least one carton.

h.) CED class schedule and bulletin can be gotten from the School of Continuing Education (632-7050) located in Room N-201 of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Building.

Office Contacts

3. The following is a list of offices on campus that have supplied materials in the past with notes on the kind of material they supply. Actual materials available are different in any given year. Call each of these offices and ask them to send you any orientation materials and publications produced for incoming students. You may want to give them examples of the types of things you are interested in from the list below.

a.) New Student Programs, 102 Humanities, 632-6710
You will already be contacting them for bus schedules but ask also for copies of their academic guide for new students as well as any other pertinent brochures which they produce.

b.) Office of Student Affairs, 348 Administration, 632-6700
Student handbook and other orientation brochures.

c.) Office of Student Activities, 266 Stony Brook Union, 632-6828
You will already be contacting them in reference to bus schedules; also ask for brochures on student organizations and student activities and programs housed in the Union.

d.) Traffic Office, 192 Administration, 632-6345
They have brochures on parking stickers and parking regulations.

e.) Public Safety, 144 Administration, 632-6350
They have safety brochures on rape prevention, bicycle theft prevention, etc; also ask if they have brochures describing the walk/escort service.

f.) Center for Academic Advising, E-3310 Library, 632-7082
Take a walk up there and ask if you can have a representative sample of their brochures (available in waiting area). We do not need many as we can send interested patrons up to the Center for this information. Get numerous copies of their brochure entitled "Help." It is a brief directory to academic services and programs helpful to undergraduate students.

g.) Reference Department - N1001 Library, 632-7110
Ask Audrey or Mr. Cook for a supply of Library hours handout. Remember that Ref. Dept. also has copies of library hours, campus maps and handouts on libraries and library services. While it is probably not necessary to put copies of all the Library handouts at the information desk, do remind volunteers that the Reference Dept. has them so they can refer patrons.

h.) Campus newspapers can be consulted for listings of campus events. These papers are usually placed in the Galleria for distribution. If you want to insure copies for the information desk, call the newspaper offices and ask them to send you several copies.

Campus Currents, Office of University Affairs, 632-6310
Statesman, Stony Brook Union, 632-6480
Stony Brook Press, Central Hall, 632-6451

4. Two copies of each publication, handout, etc. should be labeled "Desk Copy Do Not Remove." This will ensure that copies for consultation are retained at the desk once all the "give-aways" are gone. For the more popular items note on the front cover where students can get more copies. (Check with the book store to see if they will be selling copies of the Bulletin. Copies of the final class schedule are often available at the Registrar in Administration Building). All multiple copies of publications should be in clearly marked cartons to facilitate restocking at the information desk.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. On the first morning of the desk's operation load boxes of publications onto book truck and wheel out to the desk opposite the Current Periodicals Reading Room. Bring masking tape, scissors and magic markers.

2. Tape helpful items such as a campus map and a bus schedule to the top of the desk, open for easy reference. You may also want to tape down one copy of each of the three handout pages given to volunteers at the orientation session as they sometimes forget to bring their own. Provide a desk schedule.

3. In the remaining area put piles of publications and brochures (some of each on either side) for students to take away with them.

4. Place one set of "desk copy" publications on each side of the desk creating two separate stations. This allows each of the two volunteers to have their own set of publications to refer to in answering questions.

5. Place all extra publications in cartons or piles on the shelves under the desk so that they are available for restocking.

6. Hold back half of the undergraduate schedules and bulletins to be put out the second day. It is best to keep these in your office as the temptation to give them all out on the first day is great.

7. When first staffers arrive explain the set-up to them and ask them to explain it to the person who will relieve them. Also, give them a pad and pencil to be kept at the desk to note down any frequently asked questions to which they can't find an answer. Take a walk over to the Information Booth in front of the Administration Building to see if they have any intersting materials that we don't.

8. Check with the desk staffers at midday to make sure all is running smoothly and find out if there are any questions noted on the pad. If so get an anwer and post it at the desk for afternoon staffers.

9. At the end of the day place "give-away" items (except those taped to the desk) under the desk for the evening. They should be left undisturbed until the morning. Take "desk-copies" and store in your office until the next morning. On the next day set-up again bringing out reserve copies of undergraduate schedules and bulletins.

10. When cleaning up on the last day you may want to leave extra copies of publications on the desk for students. Be sure to save at least one of each publication as a sample to show to next years information desk organizer.

11. Write a thank you note and send a copy to each individual staffer praising them for volunteering and mentioning that the Committee will look forward to contacting them next year. (See sample note in Appendix D). Put a note in the Daily Bulletin to let the staff know that this effort was successful and thanking all those who helped.

12. Revise this manual to keep it up to date. Add any new procedures or efforts you may have undertaken which you think should be continued in the future.

APPENDIX A
LETTER TO DEPARTMENT HEADS

Reference Department
Main Library
State University of New York at Stony Brook
Stony Brook, New York 11794-3331
telephone: (516) 632-7110

StonyBrook

MEMORANDUM

To Department Heads

From Library Services Committee

Subject Planning Library Information Desk 8/31/88 - 9/2/88

Date August 2, 1988

The fall semester begins on Wednesday, August 31. We need volunteers to participate at the Information Desk on August 31, September 1, and September 2. Hours will be from 9:00 to 3:00 daily. Please provide the names and hours of volunteers by filling in the appropriate slots on the attached schedule.

Thank you for your cooperation and support. Please return schedules to Amelia Salinero (Cataloging) by August 22, 1988.

cc: Asano Albertson
Nathan Baum
David Bolotine
Barbara Brand
Mitsuko Collver
Roxanna Herrick
Curtis Kendrick
Evert Volkerz
Jai Yun

APPENDIX A
BLANK DESK SCHEDULE

Library Information Desk (Galleria)
Fall Term, 198

	9 - 10	10 - 11	11 - 12	12 - 1	1 - 2	2 - 3	3 - 4
Wednesday							
Thursday Sept.							
Friday Sept.							

A2

APPENDIX B

LIBRARY INFORMATION DESK SOURCES OF INFORMATION

DIRECTIONAL QUESTIONS

University Offices Located in the Main Library (typed list).

Frequently Asked Questions (typed list)

Campus Directory

Campus Maps

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS, LOCATIONS, MEETING TIMES

Undergraduate Bulletin	-	Final Undergraduate Class Schedule
Graduate Bulleting	-	Final Graduate Class Schedule
CED Bulletin	-	Class locations and times posted on door of CED Office N201 Soc&Beh Sciences

TRANSPORTATION/PARKING

Bus Schedule S60

Train Schedule L.I.R.R. Port Jeff Line

Three Village Trips SUSB to NYC at reduced rates

Parking Regulations

Parking Garage / Lot Photocopy

OTHER INFORMATION

Safety brochures

AIDS & Safe Sex Brochures

Student Guides and Handbook

Specific Academic Programs (brochures are in Center for Academic Advising on programs such as S.A.I.N.T., Internship Program etc.)

Student Union Activities Flyers

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OFFICES LOCATED IN THE MAIN LIBRARY

OFFICE	ROOM #	TEL. EXT.
ACADEMIC ADVISING	E3310	7082
ACADEMIC JUDICIARY COMMITTEE	E3320	7080
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	W4504	6015
ADVISING CENTER (walk-in)	E3310	7082
A.I.M.	W3520	7090
CAREER DEVELOPMENT	W0550	6810
CHALLENGE PROGRAM	E3320	7082
CLASSICS	E4309	7460
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES	E2345	6992
COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC STANDING	E3320	7080
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE	E4309	7460
FRENCH AND ITALIAN	N4004	7440
GERMAN AND SLAVIC	N3009	7360
HEALTH PROFESSIONS ADVISING	E3310	7082
HISPANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE	N3017	6935
HUMANITIES INSTITUTE	E4321	7765
HUMANITIES PROGRAM	E4309	7460
INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY OF WORLD RELIGIONS	N5001	6580
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM	E3320	7080
JUDAIC STUDIES	E4309	7460
LANGUAGE LAB	N3090	6950
LEARNING SKILLS CENTER	W3510	8693
LONG ISLAND LIBRARY RESOURCES COUNCIL	E5310	6650
MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS	S5423	6242
MINORITY STUDENT NETWORK	E3310	7082
PRE-LAW ADVISING	E3320	7080
PRE-MED ADVISING	E3310	7082
PURCHASING	W4559	6050
RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION	W5510	6960
TRANSFER STUDENT PROGRAM	E3320	7080
TRAVEL OFFICE	W4505	6021
UNDERGRADUATE EVENING PROGRAM	E3320	7080
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES PROGRAM (URECA)	E3320	7080
UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES OFFICE	E3320	7080
V.I.T.A.L. (Volunteer agency)	W0530	6812

APPENDIX B

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS--INFORMATION DESK

Q. Where can I get help selecting courses?

A. Office of Undergraduate Studies, Library E3320.

Q. Can I get a library tour somewhere?

A. Reference Department has self-guided audiotape tour of the library. Ask about it in the Reference Office. Also, some guided tours are available in the second week of classes--ask at Reference Desks.

Q. What do I need to check out books?
A. A validated student I.D. (I.D. office-191 Administration.)
Note: Returning students can have existing I.D.'s validated at the Circulation Desk if they have proof of registration for the Fall 1988 semester. (Print-out of courses from the Registrar's Office.)

Q. Where can I take/get information about proficiency tests/challenge exams?
A. Undergraduate Studies (Library E3320) or in the academic department teaching the particular subject.

Q. How do I get a carrel? A Locker?
A. Carrels no longer being reserved. Lockers may be requested in Library Administration from Margaret McHugh.

Q. Where are the language departments?
A. Germanic and Slavic, Library N-3009; French and Italian, Library N-4004; Hispanic Languages and Literature, Library N-3017.

Q. How do I apply for a job in the Library?
A. See Betty Dadura in Library Administration.

Q. Where is required course reading material kept?
A. Reserve Reading Room-Library E-1330.

Q. Where are current newspapers?
A. Current Periodicals Reading Room.

Q. Does the library own any films and/or video cassettes?
A. Yes, there is a catalog of the Library's films and video cassettes at the Reference Desk and in the Audiovisual Department (Library S-1460.)

Q. Where are the computer terminals/microcomputers in the Library?
A. The SINC site near the Audio Visual room. (Library S1460.) Hours are posted on the door.

AND.....Info Desk staffers should be able to direct patrons to the following locations: Reserve Room, Reference Department, Government Documents, Microforms, Maps, Music, Circulation. Stacks, Current Periodiclas, Audio Visual, Library SINC site/computer terminal room, Library Administration (Director's Office), and University Administration Building.

If you can't answer a question, refer patron to Reference Department.

APPENDIX C
MEMO TO VOLUNTEERS

Reference Department
Main Library
State University of New York at Stony Brook
Stony Brook, New York 11794-3331
telephone: (516) 246-5977
NEW TELEPHONE #
632-7110

StonyBrook

MEMORANDUM

To Information Desk Volunteers

From Library Services Committee

Subject Library Information Desk

Date August 24, 1988

Mary Beth Souza

Thank you for offering to serve at the Library Information Desk this week. You are scheduled to be at the desk at 1-2 on Wed. 8/31 and 1-2 on Thur. 9/1.

Orientation will be held for those of you who would like some training. There will be two sessions held on August 29th, 1988 in the second floor Conference Room. Please come to either the 11:00 A.M. session or 1:00 P.M. session, whichever is most convenient.

Library Information Desk (Galleria)
Fall Term, 1988.

	9 - 10	10 - 11	11 - 12	12 - 1	1 - 2	2 - 3
Wednesday 31 Aug.	Betty Ward (Serials) Elizabeth Geoghegan (Serials)	Janet Cavanaugh (Ref Danna Bell (Spec. Coll.)	Ruth Regan (Coll. Dev.) Doris Tweedy (Cat.)	Bob Lobou (Cat.) Karen McHugh (Cat.)	A. Salinero (Cat.) M.B. Souza (Ref.)	Ann Krass (Cir.) Jeanne Gavin (Cir.)
Thursday 1 Sept.	Evelyn Chironis (Serials) Mima Haim (Serials)	Joyce Easterbrook (Cat.) Rose Brown (Spec. Coll.)	Linda Plunket (Coll. Dev.) Doris Tweedy (Cat.)	Bob Lobou (Cat.) Karen McHugh (Cat.)	Jon Hufford (Ref.) M. B. Souza (Ref.)	Stephanie Epstein (Cir.) Peggy Labuschi (Cir.)
Friday 2 Sept.	Marie Profera (Serials) Marilyn Weisbrod (Serials)	Danna Bell (Spec. Coll.) Sue Rose (Spec. Coll.)	Joan Sadoff (Ref.) Doris Chaberek (Ref.)	B. Brand (ILL) H. Robinson (Ref.)	Jon Hufford (Ref.) A. Salinero (Cat.)	R. Feinberg (Ref.) Curt Kendrick (Cir.)

Two staff members are needed for each time slot.

APPENDIX C
COMPLETED DESK SCHEDULE

C2

APPENDIX D
THANK YOU NOTE TO VOLUNTEERS

StonyBrook

Main Library
State University of New York at Stony Brook
Stony Brook, New York 11794-3300
telephone: (516) 632-7100

September 15, 1988

Dear

Thanks for staffing the library's information desk at the start of the semester. It is quite apparent that the desk served a vital orientation function for all services and departments within this building. This year's effort was particularly successful thanks to volunteers like yourself.

Again, thank you for participating in this endeavor. We enjoyed it and hope you did too! See you next year.

Sincerely,

Amelia Salinero
Information Desk Co-Coordinator
Library Services Committee

Mary Beth Souza
Mary Beth Souza
Information Desk Co-Coordinator
Library Services Committee